

I've been lied about and others get death threats. Covid has shown the power of misinformation | The Guardian

By Devi Sridhar

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Before the experience of the past two years of Covid-19, I had assumed that a deadly viral outbreak would be quickly contained by governments. Especially in rich countries with good health systems, public health infrastructure, economic support packages and trust in public institutions. I thought there would be general consensus on what needed to be done, and that people would get their information directly from experts working in universities and public health authorities. I mean, who would want to risk getting a deadly infection?

Now, I wonder if an even more deadly virus - like a pandemic-ready version of Mers, a coronavirus which killed 20% of those it infected in South Korea before being contained in 2015 - would be treated the same way as Covid-19. Would thousands of people show up at protests because they had read on Facebook that Mers was a hoax? Would there be similar scenarios at every pandemic after that? After my experience of actively working through the Covid-19 pandemic, these possibilities seem horrifyingly possible.

[...]

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